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ABSTRACT

The author discusses the importance of affective objectives in the educational process, and the difficulties in formulating, providing activities in, and evaluating the attainment of these objectives. A distinction is drawn between explicit objectives (those that should be revealed to the student) and implicit objectives (those that are teacher-centered). Techniques for writing affective behavioral objectives are discussed. Methods for encouraging positive attitudes through knowledge activities and learning activities are examined for implicit objectives. Enabling objective (generally explicit) and terminal objective (generally implicit) criteria are discussed, and various difficulties in assessing their attainment are studied. (HJB)

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AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES - IMPLICIT OR EXPLICIT?

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In attempting to develop some materials in the area of cultural pluralism, we were continually confronted with the problem of affective objectives. Not only was specificity a problem, but teacher objectives and student objectives seemed to be confusing the issues. We finally began to realize that some student objectives could be affective, some never could be, and that most objectives had affective underpinnings which could, or could not be, revealed to the student. That which follows is an attempt to clarify what seems to be some unclarifiable paradoxes.

Working with affective instructional objectives is a difficult task and many teachers avoid them completely or are very haphazard in their approach to them. One of the major problems is whether or not affective objectives should be made known to the student or should they be for the teacher's use only. The answer is that some affective objectives are explicit and for the student and others are for the teacher's eyes only. The term "explicit" is applied to a student-centered objective so clearly stated that there is no doubt as to its expressed meaning. In this context, "implicit" is just the opposite of "explicit" and indicates a teacher-centered affective objective in which meanings or outcomes are implied or suggested as a result of explicit student behaviors.

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Objectives and Attitudes

One of the apparent major strengths of a competency-based program is that objectives for students are explicit and public. Are implied objectives a violation of this principle? No, because some affective objectives are teacher objectives and not student objectives. Does this mean that all affective objectives are implied and remain hidden from students? Again the answer is "no." Some affective objectives are public and student-centered while others may not be.

From research and experience, we know that a direct frontal attack on certain attitudes will not change those attitudes and may even reinforce them. We also know that even when confronted with positive evidence, or proof, that an attitude is undesirable or a value is negative, or self-destroying (drugs, cigarettes, for example), the individual may not change his belief because it is held with a deep emotional commitment which may even be irrational. Thus, the direct rational appeal where some attitudes are concerned may only antagonize and result in failure.

Recognizing that the direct approach might end in failure, what can the teacher do who sincerely believes that desirable attitudes are the most important aspect of teaching and that real mastery of a subject is highly dependent on attitudes? First, it must be recognized that behind most instructional activities the teacher has some affective objectives. Whether these objectives are made explicit to the student or whether they are implicit and for the teacher only, depends on the nature of the objective. For example, in a Driver Education class, awareness of safe

driving practices and a positive attitude toward safe driving are worthy affective objectives. There is no problem here in making these objectives explicit because they are non-controversial. The problem becomes quite different when the objective is controversial or it appears that the student has a negative attitude toward the topic or subject. Controversial subjects might include race, drugs, sex, politics, religion, capitalism and communism. It would be absurd for the teacher to announce "Drugs are hell and in this class I'm going to teach you not to use drugs and if you do, you flunk the class!" It's explicit all right - the kids are immediately on guard - "they'll show this old bat he's all wet!" Or this: "In this English class you're really going to love Shakespeare." Student to another, "Oh, another one of those. Now I know I gotta hate Shakespeare!" The direct approach may result in just the opposite of what the teacher wants to achieve. On the other hand, the indirect approach may succeed because it does not antagonize and carries no threat of punishment if the teacher fails to achieve his/her implied affective objectives. If it is still a worthy objective, the teacher must seek other means to achieve it.

Secondly, the teacher should ask these questions: (1) What are the terminal, affective objectives <u>for me</u> for this lesson, unit, or course? (2) What are the terminal objectives (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor) for my students? (3) What affective terminal objectives can be made explicit to my students and what ones should be implicit? (4) What means of assessment will I use to determine if the affective objectives (explicit or implicit) have been achieved? Evaluation of achievement of affective objectives is an entirely different ball game than working in the knowledge or psycho-motor areas.

Most teachers will have few problems setting up the terminal objectives for a topic, unit, or course as long as they deal with retention, recall or a motor skill. They know that terminal objectives need enabling objectives which in turn are supported by enabling activities. However, if for the teacher the terminal objectives are attitudinal and implicit (teacher-centered) what kinds of enabling objectives and activities do you choose now? The task is not an easy one but, since my terminal objectives are implicit, suggested or hoped for and are <u>for me alone</u>, what enabling objectives can I prepare that are explicit and assessable in relation to students? Also, my enabling objectives must be relevant to my terminal objective and enable the student to reach some level of competency in terms of this affective objective I deem to be valuable. Thus, in planning for achievement of affective objectives, the teacher should:

1. Recognize that behind most instructional activities are hidden, implicit affective teacher objectives (I want him to enjoy history; I want him to be a good citizen, etc.).

2. Determine what relevant explicit enabling objectives will aid the students to achieve my terminal objective.

3. Determine the means of assessment that will be used to discover if the teacher has failed or succeeded in achieving <u>his</u> terminal objective.

Note that it is highly possible for a student to reach the knowledge objectives of a course with flying colors and fail miserably the teachers implicit terminal objective. What do you do with the student who receives one hundred percent on the written safety test and breaks every safety rule in practice? Or the English student who always gets one hundred

percent on the grammar test but violates every rule of good grammar in his composition? While these students may have achieved content mastery, transfer of learning has not taken place and the reasons are usually attitudinal. Since this involves the teacher's terminal implicit affective objective, the fault could be in the teacher's choice of enabling objectives and activities. On the other hand, it could be a result of conditions beyond the control of the teacher. One thing is sure, in terms of affective objectives, our planning is often so haphazard that we are guaranteed failure before we begin.

Some Difficulties

Before attempting to write implicit or explicit affective objectives, further clarification may be in order. It is not difficult to determine specific behaviors we normally consider evidence of goals such as "enjoy" or "take an interest in" a topic such as classical music, and we can write down the behaviors that reflect this interest. Perhaps he talks about classical music a lot, states that he likes it, plays it, listens to it in preference to "pop" music, and so on. We may even be able to state which of these behaviors we would like to see in our music students as a result of taking our course in classical music. We can, in other words, specify behavioral objectives for attitudes. However, as soon as we require these behaviors we alter circumstances, and their meaning changes. To take an extreme example, we often judge enjoyment by smiles and laughs. If, then, we state as a behavioral objective: "The student shall smile and/or laugh at least six times each class period" and particularly if we grade on it, we are likely to end up with forced hollow laughter, giggles, grimaces, and the like. Similarly, "optional" attending

of concerts or reading of books outside class (a common index of motivation) is no longer optional if it is required for a passing grade. Even if we do not grade on attitudes, we may encourage the student to engage in them to please us, not for the enjoyment he gets out of them. Hence, we cannot be sure of their meaning.

To be sure that the behaviors we use to indicate attitudes reflect "true" attitudes (the likelihood of similar behaviors after the student leaves school), we can phrase them in the future or keep them to ourselves. The comment "I hope this course will stimulate you so that ten years from now you read at least one American writer each month" is less likely to create pressure to read for a grade than "I hope that while you take this course you will read at least one American writer each month, although I won't grade on it." Alternatively, we can write the latter objective without telling the student, and can inconspicuously keep track of the optional books the student reads. In neither case are attitude objectives used as a teaching tool in the same way as knowledge or psycho-motor objectives. They cannot, and should not, be set up as required course objectives the student must meet during the term.

Affective Behavioral Objectives

Although we cannot always set behavioral objectives for attitudes as part of the requirements for a course, we can still encourage positive attitudes by the kinds of knowledge objectives and learning activities we plan and the way we conduct our classes. When we ask what it is that makes one student pursue a subject on his own and another avoid it whenever possible, we are looking for the causes of behavior. We want the student

to engage in certain behaviors for their own sake - to "enjoy" what he is doing. Although a complete analysis of behavior is beyond the scope of this discussion, some of the effects on attitudes of setting behavioral objectives for achievement are discussed below.

Let's look at the following as a non-behaviorally stated objective for a teacher in a tenth grade English class. "I want my students to enjoy reading." In order to enjoy an activity a student must do it. He will not do what he cannot do, and he will not be likely to do what he does badly or with great difficulty. In order to enjoy reading American Literature for its own sake, a student must have a minimum skill level in reading. How many people <u>enjoy</u> reading a book (in Spanish or French, for example) when they have to look up the meaning of every other word? The poor reader is faced with a similar obstacle when reading Michener or Shakespeare. By insuring that students at least <u>can</u> read at a high enough level of skill to understand Michener easily, we increase the likelihood that they <u>will</u> read him. Writing behavioral objectives forces us to specify skills necessary for proficiency in an area. To the extent that this encourages us to make sure that each student reaches them, behavioral objectives help ensure those skills that make doing something possible.

It is not enough, however, to make sure that each student performs at a given level while in class. Within the school walls there are many reasons for reading. The student may read to get a grade, to avoid the embarrassment of not having read, to gain teacher or peer approval and so on. If we want to tell how much he enjoys reading, we must look at what

is controlling his behavior. Some of what is controlling his reading has nothing to do with reading itself; it is "artificial" or "extrinsic." Grades, avoiding the embarrassment of not having done homework, and teacher approval are all "added" consequences which occur only in the school situation. If the student is reading because of them, he may not read when they are no longer present.

If we wish a student to continue to engage in an activity after he leaves school, we must either see that the student "enjoys" the activity for the natural consequences of doing it or we must make it useful outside school so that it is socially rewarding. By developing students' skills in a nonpunitive way, we make students predisposed to continue to engage in an activity. By making the activity relevant, we make it likely to be rewarded and maintained.

A student is not likely to enjoy an activity he was "forced" to learn or one associated with punishment or failure. Think of a subject you tend to avoid. It is probably a subject in which you were not very successful. One reason a student may not succeed is that objectives are not clear. The student may not be able to tell what the teacher wants or see or feel progress. He may waste time and energy on things the teacher does not consider important and fail to perform in the areas in which the teacher grades. Frustrated, he is likely to feel resentment or hostility, some of which will be directed toward the subject itself and the teacher. In contrast, when the behavior expected of the student is clearly stated, he is more likely to spend time efficiently and assess his own progress. While he may still not work hard enough to be successful,

he at least knows what needs to be done and thus avoids the frustration of ambiguity - the responsibility is on him.

From the foregoing we can conclude that for affective objectives to have a chance of being fulfilled the student must:

1. Be involved in a directed non-passive activity.
2. Be able to participate in the activity (have the skills).
3. Be intrinsically motivated or positively rewarded.
4. Feel that the objectives and activities are relevant and rewarding.

Writing Explicit or Implicit Affective Objectives

The main ingredients of a competency-based behavioral objective are behavior, conditions, and standard (criterion). This holds true for objectives whether they are in the cognitive, affective, or psycho-motor domain. In a learning packet we have prepared, students are asked to take a non-behaviorally stated affective objective and restate it in behavioral terms and include the criterion for assessment. Take this objective, for example: "The student will display the qualities of a responsible citizen." Such an objective, while worthy, is impossible to achieve in a single Social Studies class and may even take a life time. In order to make such an objective manageable and practical, the teacher asks herself, "What kinds of behavior, here and now, which can be assessed, will give me some clues as to responsible citizenship?" Once the various kinds of desirable citizenship behaviors are defined, what the student is to do and the level of performance can be easily stated.

Can teacher-centered affective terminal objectives always be stated in terms of the conditions, behavior, and criterion: While often difficult

to do, the answer is "yes." The conditions may be within the classroom or beyond it. The behavior may be directly observed or inferred from related behavior. We can give a paper and pencil test on "safety" to a student (knowledge) and infer he will behave safely. We can also have him demonstrate good safety practices (using the pencil and paper knowledge) in a formal situation and again infer he will behave safely in future situations. Best of all, we can observe him in his garage working on his "hot rod" and using good safety practices. For now, at least, we know he is using good safety practices. We can only infer that he will behave the same way in the future - chances are he will.

For many years, college supervisors have berated student teachers for using such daily lesson plan objectives as:

"Appreciation of music!"

"Understanding the American way of life."

"The enjoyment of poetry."

-----ad nauseam.

However, in the light of this discussion, such previously unacceptable objectives can take on real instructional meaning.

We know how ridiculous it is for a teacher to say, "In this class you are going to love Spanish." Some students will say to himself, "I don't like that old bag and already I hate Spanish!" Obviously, the teacher wants students to love Spanish for numerous reasons. However, her love and enthusiasm for the subject cannot be directly forced upon students - it may have the opposite effect. Such high sounding objectives need refinement in terms of the conditions, the behavior to be exhibited and the assessment techniques to be used.

While we can state the conditions and behavior for an attitudinal objective, what about the criterion? The problem is we cannot always precisely measure or establish specific criteria for attitudinal objectives. Unfortunately, we must turn to often imprecise assessment techniques - informal observation, interviews, and paper and pencil attitude questionnaires and inventories.

Just how can the teacher achieve desirable attitudinal changes in students? This can be achieved indirectly through management of the instructional situation using these approaches: (1) knowledge (content); (2) learning activities; and (3) acting as a model for the desirable attitudinal behavior. To achieve these changes (objectives), instructional planning must include careful selection of content which is relevant to clearly stated achievement objectives, learning activities which are varied and interesting and give enabling support to the objectives, and modeling of the desirable attitudinal behavior. Did you ever have a teacher who was made to teach math although he was incompetent in the subject and obviously disliked it? What happened to the students?

There appears to be two basic kinds of affective objectives: enabling and terminal. An enabling affective objective is most often explicit, student-centered, and usually lends itself to precise assessment. A terminal affective objective is most often implicit, teacher-centered, and may or may not lend itself to precise assessment.

Some examples of these objectives are as follows:

1. Enabling, explicit, student-centered objective - After a class discussion on good sportsmanship the student will write a minimum of five (5) reasons why good sportsmanship is essential to individual and team performance in a basketball game. Criterion: Five (5) acceptable reasons as determined by teacher judgment.

2. Terminal, implicit, teacher-centered objective -
Given the opportunity to participate in a basketball game, the student will demonstrate good sportsmanship by abiding by the rules and referee's decisions, infrequency of fouls (especially technicals) and overall good personal conduct on the court.
Assessment: Observation and checking record bood by teacher.

3. Enabling, explicit, student-centered objective -
After a demonstration on good safety practices in Auto Shop, given six case studies of Auto Shop accidents, the student will identify either the safe or unsafe practices in these accidents.
Criterion: In four of six cases identify a minimum of two each safe or unsafe practices.

4. Terminal, implicit, teacher-centered objective -
Given the Auto Shop lab situation the teacher will observe the student at work and prepare a check sheet for each student as to safe and unsafe practices. When a student is guilty of four unsafe practices the teacher will arrange for an immediate conference to remediate the situation.

Note that in objectives 1 and 3, knowledge and activity are used to achieve affective student objectives - good sportsmanship and good safety practices. In objectives 2 and 4, the teacher uses knowledge and activity to observe if he is achieving his terminal objective (his student displays good sportsmanship; uses good safety practices).

Assessment of Affective Objectives

The major difficulty in writing objectives for the affective domain is that they often lack the preciseness and specificity of cognitive and psycho-motor objectives. Most teachers readily recognize that success in students achieving cognitive and psychomotor objectives is highly dependent upon attitudes, interests and values (the affective domain). They hope students will have a positive attitude toward their subject; they hope students will be interested in it; they hope students will value it. But, how will they know - or will they ever know? Because

assessment in this area is difficult, most teachers throw up their hands - give up and just keep on "hoping." While as yet we cannot always provide precise measurement of attitudinal objectives for each student, they are crucial to the learning process.

We know writing objectives for the affective domain is quite different from writing objectives for the cognitive domain because of the difficulty in observing and measuring people's interests, attitudes, and values. The technique is normally to make generalizations about affective qualities from the things people do. A person who reads a great deal on his own can be described as being interested in reading. A person who consistently chooses to watch football games on TV in preference to listening to symphonies can be described as liking football more than symphonies. A person who votes in all elections, participates in civic affairs, keeps abreast of local and national developments and doesn't break laws might be described as "a good citizen" or you might say that he "believes in" the way in which our government works. A person who eats wholesome food, exercises daily, gets plenty of sleep, brushes his teeth three times a day and gets a physical checkup twice a year can be said to value his health. A person who continually does things for another person, arranges to be with the other person and expresses affection both verbally and physically toward the person can be said to like or even love that person.

There are possibly three ways in which affective objectives may be measured (not precisely, but they can provide the necessary feedback): (1) observation; (2) interviews and counseling; (3) questionnaires. Each of these techniques has its limitations and difficulties, but they can help.

The principal method of assessment in a competency-based program is through the observation of performance in terms of a standard of competency. Such an approach can lend itself virtually to all curriculum areas and holds true whether the competency sought is cognitive, psycho-motor, or affective. Thus many attitudes, interests, and values are observable. We can observe a student's attitude toward reading by the number of books he reads. We can observe a student's interest in sewing by the clothes she makes at home (if she can afford them). We can observe how a student values auto mechanics by the way he takes care of the family car.

All of the above are positive factors in assessment - if they can be observed. The major problem with observation is the impossibility of observing student behavior all of the time. What he or she does when not observed, or in the future, must be inferred from observed behavior and hopefully it will be positive. At least inferences are better than nothing at all and can provide feedback to the teacher about the affective achievement of his student. We can observe student behavior in class through oral reports, committee reports, and the like. All of these give affective feedback to the observing teacher. In most cases, the low achieving student is not interested in your subject, has a negative attitude toward it, sees no value in it and he may feel that way about you personally! This is where motivation and reinforcement theory can be of help.

The interview and counseling technique works best in a one-to-one situation. Next, small groups may provide the necessary feedback. One of the unique advantages of an individualized competency-based program is

that criterion check-out usually calls for numerous conferences between student and instructor. Herein students may be questioned orally in either a formal or informal situation. Perhaps the major disadvantage of this procedure is that the teacher's presence may have a very strong influence on students' responses. If you are really interested in how some students affectively perceive your class and you as a teacher, talk to your grade counselor. You may be shocked, but you may also receive just the feedback you need.

The paper and pencil questionnaire is probably the most typical method employed in assessing attitudes, interests, and values. The problem of students responding in a "socially desirable" way rather than the way they really feel still exists with the questionnaire, but that response may be less than in a face-to-face interview situation. In using either method (interview or questionnaire) it is highly recommended that students be informed clearly that there will be no consequence for them in relation to their responses (i.e., they will not be graded, their academic program will not be modified, etc.) and that their responses are to be used to evaluate the effects of the instructional program and to revise it using the data - not to evaluate them.

The first of two major types of affective responses requested on paper-pencil instruments are items requesting the student to report how often he engages in various activities, for example, "How often have you visited our art museum in the past year?" or "How many novels have you read of your own volition in the past month?"

The second type of item is that which requests the student to report his feelings, opinions, preferences or values on some topic. For example, "Do you enjoy learning about history?" "What is you favorite school subject?" "Do you think people should smoke?" Questionnaire items can be made in various forms of which the following five are exemplary:

1. Yes - No:

   Do you enjoy looking at buildings and structures? Yes ( )
   No ( )

2. Scaled:

   How often do you initiate conversation with others about national affairs?

   Never ( ) Sometimes ( ) Always ( )

   To what extent do you obey the playground regulations?

   Not at all ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) To a Great Extent

   The material studied in this class was worthwhile.

   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Rank Order:

   Rank the following leisure time activities in order of your preference:

   Swimming ____ Reading ____ TV Watching ____, etc.

4. Multiple Choice:

   Which would you rather do during a one-hour free choice period at school?

   ____ a. read stories

   ____ b. make an art mural for the hall

   ____ c. have group singing.

5. Open Ended:

Briefly describe your feelings about the equality of people.

_____

_____

Summary

Attitudes are important. If we are to produce adults who function effectively in society and who contribute positively to it, we must be concerned with what students do after they leave us. In addition to teaching specific competencies, we hope to create positive attitudes - that is, a high tendency to use those competencies and to pursue an area further.

Outlining specific behaviors that usually indicate positive attitudes is valuable for measuring students' attitudes and interest in a course but only if students are not under any pressure to produce the behaviors designated. Behavioral objectives for attitudes, in contrast to objectives for achievement should not, therefore, be set as requirements for a course.

Although the way in which the teacher manages his students, whether through positive reinforcement or punishment, is probably the most important factor in creating attitudes, the kinds of objectives he sets are also important. In addition, to the extent that objectives communicate clearly, they can help the student master a subject. Competence, in turn, makes it possible for the student to obtain the natural rewards from working effectively in a course. He can enjoy activity for its own sake as well as for its usefulness in life. In other words, clear, worthwhile objectives can help establish positive attitudes.

Affective objectives, while they sometimes may not lend themselves to precise measurement, can be assessed. The affective domain is tied up with feelings, emotions, attitudes, interests and values - the teacher must know if he is effective and affective as well.

A final word of caution - while every teacher ought to try to achieve desirable attitudinal change in students, sometimes it is impossible. Attitudes are often dependent on variables over which the teacher has no control - the home, the school, peers - to name a few. The task often seems hopeless. However, the teacher who strives to achieve affective objectives and carefully plans his instruction accordingly has a greater chance for success than those who ignore them completely or directly force them on students completely oblivious of the consequences. Negative attitudes are learned and sometimes this is what we teach!

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